

The ultimate sausage roll

Pie expert Calum Franklin says simplicity is key when it comes to the ideal mouth-watering sausage roll. In this recipe, flaky puff pastry encases a succulent bacon and cumberland sausage filling, seasoned with thyme...



INGREDIENTS

(SERVES 4)

2 egg yolks beaten with 2tsp water, for brushing
Pinch of black sesame seeds
Pinch of white sesame seeds
Plum and star anise chutney, to serve (there is a recipe for this chutney, and others, in the book, but you can use any shop-bought chutney if you prefer!)

400g rough puff pastry (see below, or use shop-bought puff pastry)

For the filling:

700g cumberland sausages, skins removed
150g streaky bacon, finely chopped
25g thyme, leaves picked
A third of a tsp table salt
Large pinch of freshly ground black pepper

PASTRY METHOD

(Or you can use ready-rolled pastry)

500g plain flour
1tsp fine table salt
500g butter, chilled and diced
250ml ice-cold water

1 If making the pastry by hand, sift the flour into a large bowl and add the salt and butter. Using your fingers, gently mix to a rough dough. If making the pastry using a mixer, sift the flour into the bowl and add the salt and butter. Using a paddle attachment, work at a medium speed for two to three minutes until the butter has formed small nuggets and the mixture becomes grainy. Add the ice-cold water all

at once to the flour and butter and continue at a medium speed just to bring the dough together. The dough should not be well mixed; you want the dough to be straggly and rough, with the fats still visible, so don't work it for too long.

2 Tip the mixture out onto a lightly floured surface and carefully knead the dough until all the flour is incorporated. Flatten the dough slightly, wrap it tightly in cling-film and chill in the refrigerator for 30 minutes.

3 On a lightly floured surface, roll out the dough to a rectangle measuring 50cm by 30cm, using the sides of your hands to make sure the edges are neat and square. Dust any excess flour from the surface of the dough. With the shortest side closest to you, visually divide the dough horizontally into thirds and very lightly dampen the centre third with a little water, then fold the bottom one third of the dough over the centre third. Repeat by folding the remaining top third over the double layer of dough.

4 Turn the dough 90 degrees clockwise and repeat the rolling and folding process. This makes up the first two turns. Tightly wrap the dough in cling-film. Lightly press your finger into the bottom right-hand corner of the dough to make an indentation, which signifies how the dough was positioned on the board before you put it into the refrigerator. Chill the dough in the refrigerator for 30 minutes.

5 Unwrap the dough and place it on your work surface with the indent in the same position as before at the bottom right-hand corner. Next, turn the dough 90 degrees clockwise and repeat the rolling and folding processes two more times for the final two turns. Chill in the refrigerator for at least 40 minutes before it is ready to use.

SAUSAGE ROLL METHOD

1 Line a large baking tray with parchment paper. On a lightly floured surface, roll the pastry out to 5mm thick in a 40cm x 25cm rectangle. Slide the rolled-out pastry onto the lined tray and chill in the refrigerator for 30 minutes.

2 Meanwhile, put the sausage meat, bacon, thyme, salt and pepper into a bowl and mix well with your hands. Fill a large plastic piping bag with the sausage meat filling. If you don't have a piping bag, shape the filling into a 6cm wide sausage and wrap tightly in cling-film, firmly twisting the ends. Chill the filling in the refrigerator for 20 minutes.

3 Remove the rolled-out pastry from the refrigerator and dust off any excess flour from the surface. Leave the pastry on the parchment paper.

4 Using kitchen scissors, snip the tip of the piping bag to make a 5cm wide opening. Working from one end of the pastry rectangle, slowly pipe the sausage meat filling down the length of the pastry 6cm inside one edge. Alternatively, remove the cling-film from the sausage meat, unwrapping it over the pastry rectangle, and place the filling 6cm inside one edge of the pastry.

5 Lightly brush the larger exposed area of the pastry all over with egg wash, leaving the narrow 6cm border clear. Fold the egg-washed pastry over the filling to meet the narrow border, align the pastry edges and press firmly together.

6 Lightly dust the tines of a fork with flour and tap off any excess. Working down the length of the seam, firmly press the ends of the fork into the pastry to leave an impression of the tines. Whenever

necessary, dust the fork with more flour to stop it sticking to the pastry.

7 Lightly brush the sausage roll all over with egg wash and return to the refrigerator for 10 minutes to allow the egg wash to dry. Brush a second layer of egg wash over the sausage roll and then, using a sharp knife, lightly score the top of the pastry with diagonal lines all the way down its length. (This gives the pastry a little stretching room and stops it from tearing open at the seam.) Return the sausage roll to the refrigerator to chill for a further 10 minutes.

8 Preheat the oven to 190°C fan/210°C/gas mark 6.5.

9 Trim a little off the fluted seam of the pastry to neaten it into a straight edge, then brush a final layer of egg wash all over the sausage roll. Sprinkle the black and white sesame seeds along the top of the roll. Pop the tray into the preheated oven and bake the sausage roll for 25 minutes. Check the internal temperature of the filling with a digital probe thermometer - you are looking for 75°C or above. If necessary, return the sausage roll to the oven and check the temperature again every five minutes until it reaches 75°C. Alternatively, insert a metal skewer into the centre of the sausage roll and then press it against your hand - it should be very hot to the touch.

10 Remove the tray from the oven and transfer the sausage roll to a wire cooling rack. Leave to cool for 10 minutes before cutting the sausage roll with a serrated knife into eight equal slices. Serve warm with spoonfuls of chutney.

● Pie Room by Calum Franklin is published by Bloomsbury Absolute, priced £26.